A SECOND LETTER

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE.

A NEW EDITION.

SHE SIGHS, AND IS NO DUTCHESS AT HER HEART!

POPE.

LONDON:

Printed for FIELDING and WALKER, No. 20, Pater-noster-Row.

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MADAM,

THE apprehenſions which Your Grace, and ſome of your confidential Friends expreſſed, previous to the publication of my Firſt Letter, induced me to ſuppreſs many parts of it. I had formed a vain hope that a ſerious Addreſs might awaken your ſlumbering reaſon, turn its

ſcrutinies to your paſt conduct, and force upon you a conſciouſneſs of the many ſubjects which might be obſerved there, for rigid inveſtigation and ſevere chaſtiſement. But the public appearance of that Epiſtle converted your apprehenſions, and thoſe of your truſty aſſociates, into a boaſting affectation; and though it had been the ſource of much anxiety, you treated it with a childiſh levity and contempt, which has brought me to my paper again. I ſhall therefore proceed, with much good will, to offer the ſuppreſſions of my former Letter to the Public, and to Your Grace.

You have been, for ſome time, the object of pity among all perſons of reaſon and underſtanding; and I muſt beg leave to inform Your Grace, that contempt is not far behind, and may ſoon overtake you. As I have entered upon the buſineſs of holding forth a picture of your conduct to the world and to yourſelf, it becomes me to write without reſerve, or I ſhould not mortify you ſo much as to inform you, that even *Hair-dreſſers*, *Milliners*, *Mantua-makers*, and the whole Gentry of ſimilar denominations, lift up their eyes at the mention of your name, and declare you to be a phænomenon of Folly. Yes, ungrateful creatures! they make Your Grace, to whom they are ſo much indebted, the chief topic of their *profeſſional* enter-

entertainment; and render the toilettes of their employers agreeable and intereſting, by the variety of anecdotes with which your conduct furniſhes their daily intelligence. Here, indeed, I expected that Impertinence would have confined its exertions; and that it would never have been tempted to ſtray beyond the limits of private converſation. I reſted, in ſome degree, upon the timidity natural to your ſex for your preſervation from public inſult. But the crowd at *Ranelagh*, I find, has caught the infection; and, not many evenings ago, the Impertinents followed you with looks and expreſſions which would have terrified the generality of your ſex in the extreme, and which every reflecting perſon conſidered as a moſt diſgraceful and alarming mark of public diſapprobation.

Your Grace may pretend that the public diſpleaſure is a matter which gives you little concern: but declarations of this kind will not be believed; and the whole of your paſt conduct will give a poſitive denial to ſuch an aſſertion. The pains you have taken to attract public notice evidently proves, that public admiration is the object of your heart; and when this is not only withdrawn, but changed into contempt and inſult, Your Grace will in vain declare your indifference

about

about it: no one will believe you, and they who know you beſt, whatever acquieſcence they may pretend, will be the leaſt diſpoſed to give you credit on the occaſion. Beſides, Madam, to laugh at public opinion, is to make a jeſt of what the wiſeſt and beſt men have, at all times, endeavoured to deſerve by every rational and virtuous means: and to aim at being thought capable of deſpiſing it, diſcovers a diſpoſition to become of that incorrigible nature to which, if your manners are not corrected, a few years will certainly conduct you.

No one in this country, eſpecially of your ſex, when political ſentiments are not ſuppoſed to operate, ever becomes the object of public deteſtation, unleſs the good ſenſe of mankind has been evidently inſulted by ſome groſs violation of decency in manners or propriety of appearance. And I will venture to aſſert, from my own obſervations on the genius and temper of my countrymen, that the inſult muſt be very groſs on the part of any perſon of your ſex and condition before they will return it. But ſo ſtrong a conviction do I bear in my breaſt of your love of public admiration, that I doubt not but you will either accommodate yourſelf in ſome meaſure to the humour of the crowd, or retreat from their obſervation;

tion; which, as you do not at preſent ſeem much atached to *Devonſhire-Houſe*, will, I fear, be a matter of difficulty and reluctance.

It is not in the power of Nobility, nor even Royalty, in this country, and my heart glows as I write the ſentence, to frown the People into ſilence. High rank does not ſanctify folly; and as law regards not the offender, but the offence, ſo in thoſe matters of perſonal conduct to which the law does not attend, popular opinion poſſeſſes a judicial power, and will condemn the error, though it crown a character as dignified as Your Grace.

But I do not preſume, Madam, to give you information on ſubjects of this nature; I wiſh rather to awaken your recollection to what you already know. Your own experience has abundant proofs to ſupport my aſſertions, whenever you ſhall chuſe to receive them; and your own heart is ready to confirm them all, whenever you will give it an hearing. I ſay this with ſome degree of authority; for your confidential Friends, whom I ſhall not paſs over in ſilence, do not attempt your juſtification; they only offer to excuſe, and their excuſes condemn you. They endeavour to divert attention from the

ſerious conſequences of your preſent conduct, by holding forth a Picture of your Youth and Folly, which they accompany with the moſt humbling hopes of your amendment. Even the News-paper that has often and voluntarily declared your indiſcretions, has been *bribed* into an unwilling praiſe. A *purchaſed* corner has preſented the Public and Your Grace with its adulatory verſe, which may alſo have been purchaſed; as I do not believe the perſon who is employed by you or your Friends upon the occaſion, to be capable of producing a performance equal even to this trifling compoſition *.

IT

* The following lines are thoſe to which I have alluded, and whoſe *inſertion* in the News-papers, I will venture to declare, was *purchaſed*.

WIT *is a* FEATHER: this we all admit:
But ſure each Feather in your cap is wit:
'Tis the beſt flight of Genius—to improve
The ſmiles of beauty, and the bliſs of love.
Like beams around the Sun, your Feathers ſhine,
And raiſe the ſplendor of your charms divine;
Such plumes the worth of mighty conqu'rors ſhew,
For who can conquer hearts ſo well as you?

When,

It will be very appoſite to my deſign to inſert at large the ſingular Addreſs which your Poet prefixes to his *downy* compliment. You will, I believe, recollect it to be as follows:

"*To her Grace the* Duchess *of* Devonshire, *in anſwer to* "*all the abſurd and illiberal aſperſions caſt on the faſhionable* "*Feathers by churliſh old Women, ridiculous Prudes, and brutiſh* "*Cenſors.*"

What abſurdity or illiberality can be, with juſtice, attributed to thoſe who lift up their voice againſt what is univerſally acknowledg'd to be abſurd and fooliſh in the extreme, Your Grace may have been informed, but I am at a loſs to diſcover. Beſides, your Bard, in flattering you, has treated your beſt Friends with a moſt unjuſtifiable ſeverity; for if all

When on your head I ſee thoſe fluttering things,
I think that Love is there, and claps his wings.
Feathers help'd Jove to fan his am'rous flame:
Cupid has Feathers; Angels wear the ſame.
Since, then, from Heav'n their origin we trace,
Preſerve the Faſhion—it becomes Your *Grace*.

who

who cenſure your appearance deſerve the titles of *churliſh old Women*, *ridiculous Prudes* and *brutiſh Cenſors*, the firſt and ſecond of theſe characters will chiefly reſt upon Mrs. P—z and Lady Sp——r; while the ſpirited Author of that well-written *Satire*, *The Firſt of April*, and myſelf, muſt ſenſibly feel the application of the latter.

SUCH venal flattery, however, will afford Your Grace but ſmall conſolation; and you will, I ſhould hope, find it difficult, amid the lullings of ſuch praiſes, to forget the late ſeverities of a more powerful and leſs perfidious Muſe. If not, I ſhould pity you indeed. My pen ſhould then ceaſe from its unavailing labour, and ſtop ſhort in the career of admonition.

I AM diſpoſed to think, nay, I have very ſubſtantial reaſons for thinking, that Your Grace places an unreſerved confidence in perſons whom the DUKE of DEVONSHIRE does not approve, and from whom LADY SPENSER has in vain endeavoured to ſeparate you; and that matters which you do not think proper, and, perhaps, may be really improper, to communicate to your Huſband or your Mother, you freely entruſt to their confidence. You may, with all this in-

attention,

attention, be entirely innocent; but no one will be so partial to your judgment, or that of your friends, as to suppose that, when you act without the knowledge of your nearest and best connections, and under the influence of your worst, you will do good to others, or acquire honour to yourself. To this your sneering Advocates may answer, "Prove your "assertion; give one instance of her doing any thing without consulting *those* whom *you* think it her *duty* to consult upon all occasions."

Your Grace may be assured, that I shall not hazard the little credit I have already gained with the Public by asserting what I cannot prove. I have an example at hand; and, if there were a possibility of your denying the fact, I could produce sufficient and unanswerable evidence to authenticate the veracity of it.

"A Literary Person of your own Sex, with every pre-"vious mark of respect on her part, and condescending per-"mission on yours, dedicates a moral work, consisting of two "volumes, to Your Grace.—In return, you desired her to "send you a number of copies, bound in the same splendid "manner as those which she had already presented to "you. When she had thus obeyed Your Grace's commands,

" the Female Author and her works were ſo far forgotten,
" that you did not even take the neceſſary notice of paying
" her for completing your commiſſion. After waiting a con-
" ſiderable length of time, at proper intervals, and in a very
" reſpectful manner, ſhe addreſſed ſeveral Letters to Your
" Grace, to which no anſwers were given. At length, irri-
" tated by your neglect, and apprehenſive that the debt you
" had incurred might be totally forgotten, ſhe cauſed it
" to be intimated to ſome friends of Your Grace, that, if
" you did not pay her for the books, your conduct, with
" all its circumſtances, ſhould appear in a public paper.
" Alarm'd at this, or, at leaſt, influenced by LADY SPENCER,
" who knew how ill you had behaved in this buſineſs,
" you deigned to ſend the Author the mighty boon of
" TWENTY POUNDS; and, either from *ignorance* or *inſo-*
" *lence*, I can hardly ſuppoſe it *emptineſs of purſe*, that ſum
" was, as it is to be concluded by your order, compoſed
" of almoſt every ſpecies of coin current in this kingdom."

Now, Madam, from the internal evidence of the fact, I will venture, without other aſſiſtance, to declare that the DUKE was ignorant of this tranſaction. His regard for your propriety, and humanity for the perſon you propoſed to inſult, would have determined him to prevent it. Nay, I believe

believe him to have been unacquainted with it, till it was too late for his generoſity to interpoſe, and make ſome amends for your pitiful reſentment.

I WILL not, indeed I do not ſuppoſe this conduct to be the reſult of your own judgment. I ſhould think it had its adviſers. Your confidential Friends, perhaps, might ſuggeſt it to you, though I think it even beneath their ideas of revenge. It ſeems to be about equal to the ſpirit of a *Femme de Chambre*; and if Your Grace, like many of your rank, ſhould have a Prime Miniſter of that kind, I ſhould at once determine it to be ſome cunning contrivance of the Toilette.

THERE is another cauſe aſſigned for your extreme love of diſſipation; a cauſe which, as I know it to be falſe, I ſhould not mention, if I had not reſolved to lay before Your Grace every important circumſtance that relates to you. I allude, Madam, to the inſipidity which ſome of your particular Friends chuſe to thow around the DUKE of DEVONSHIRE's character. Be that as it may, I would beg Your Grace to reflect for a moment, what muſt be the folly of that woman, whoſe avowed advocates fly to the eaſy, unintereſting temper of her Huſband for a juſtification

of

of them. But, Madam, I will venture to give a firm denial to the aſſertion. The DUKE of DEVONSHIRE is a character of high reſpect. He poſſeſſes an underſtanding which has hitherto preſerved him in the path of honour and dignity; nor do I know a ſingle inſtance of his deviating from what became him as a man, or his ſtation required of him. That ſerious, tranquil, compoſed caſt of character which he poſſeſſes, as it has preſerved him from the ſnares and talons of gameſters and ſharpers, will be conſidered by the harpies of that denomination as inſipidity and want of ſpirit. The man of diſſipation and extravagance, beholding in the DUKE of DEVONSHIRE's conduct a good ſenſe which throws diſgrace upon his own, will pronounce it dullneſs and puſillanimity: but the Many who have ſhared his kindneſs, and been the objects of his friendſhip, will declare him to be poſſeſſed of a ſenſibility which is capable of the moſt generous actions, and has often performed them.

HE does not, and I congratulate him upon it, poſſeſs thoſe flaſhy talents which, however calculated they may be to amuſe, are ſeldom of any uſe to Society; and too often end in the ruin of thoſe who poſſeſs them. But he is endowed with an underſtanding which has been cultivated with wiſdom,

wiſdom, and poſſeſſes that ſolidity which forms a happy medium between immediate acquieſcence and obſtinate reſiſtance; an underſtanding that is ſubject to regulation, but not to caprice; and knows how to deliberate before it enters upon judgment. Beſides, Madam, the DUKE of DEVONSHIRE is an honeſt man; and if he poſſeſſed thoſe ſplendid follies which by many are miſtaken for abilities, your friends would no longer ſhake their heads, and ſhrug ſententiouſly at the mention of his wiſdom. But if ever the DUKE ſhould deviate from prudence into diſſipation; if he ſhould exchange the ſober diſcretion which has hitherto diſtinguiſhed him from the generality of his rank, for extravagant and riotous living; if, to uſe the language of your Friends, he ſhould give up his preſent dullneſs and inſipidity for the wiſdom of the COTERIE, or the vivacity of the GAMING TABLE; I ſhall conſider Your Grace as the cauſe of ſuch a transformation; and while the rapacious vultures that hover round the rich ſacrifice to your name, the reflecting part of mankind will deteſt you.

BUT the phlegm attributed to your noble Huſband ſeems for once to be ſuſpended; and the approaching feſtivity, which, I am informed, is of his own ſuggeſtion, will gain

him, at leaſt, a temporary credit for Taſte and Abilities. In general matters, I ſhould be ſorry to think in common with your confidential aſſociates; but for once I will ſpeak their language, and, though from different motives, will applaud the DUKE of DEVONSHIRE for a deſign which, if I gueſs aright, does him honour in the cauſe, and I hope will produce him ſatisfaction in the effect.

HIS propoſal for, or conſent to, the grand *Spectacle* which is preparing at *Devonſhire-Houſe*, is not the reſult of thoughtleſs extravagance. Depend upon it, Madam, ſome more ſecret and better motive gives life to the coſtly exhibition, at the thoughts whereof your heart pants with an anxious pleaſure. I believe your DUKE wiſhes to make you fond of home; and by converting *Devonſhire-Houſe*, which has hitherto been the ſcene of tranquil dignity and unparading hoſpitality, into an occaſional Temple of Pleaſure, he thinks it may be ſanctified to your future approbation; and that the feſtive Conſecration which is preparing, will promote in you an attachment to your home, and render it the chief ſcene of your future pleaſures: or, by one great *manœuvre* to root out of your breaſt the infant love of Gaming, which has lately appeared, to the terror and alarm of your beſt friends.

IN

In theſe Addreſſes to Your Grace, I propoſe your real good. I am not actuated by perſonal envy, or perſonal reſentment. You have done me no injury; and I would not exchange ſituations with Your Grace, though you could throw twice your preſent fortune and ſplendour into the ſcale:

I envy none their pageantry and ſhow;
I envy none the gilding of their woe.

It is impoſſible that you can be happy! Folly and diſſipation are the foes of happineſs. They may lull, or rather baffle ſorrow for a while, but it will come at laſt with collected fury, and never quit your heart 'till it is reſcued by repentance, or ſheltered in the grave. Beyond that awful ſcene, I ſhall not at preſent call your attention. May ſome event, big with alarm and danger, force your mind to contemplate its higheſt and beſt intereſts! Indeed, my pen, feeble as it is, will not reſt from making occaſional remonſtrances with you; and it will depend upon your future conduct, whether my next Letter ſhall ſpeak the language of Cenſure or of Praiſe.

FINIS.

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with you; and it will depend [illegible] future conduct,
whether my Lord [illegible] Duke of Grafton
or of Rutland.

[illegible]